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Chair: Mr. Stefanile (Vice-Chair) ..... (Italy)
later: Mr. Talbot (Chair) ..... (Guyana)

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In the absence of Mr. Talbot (Guyana), Mr. Stefanile (Italy), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 26: Agriculture development and food security (*continued*) (A/67/86-E/2012/71 and A/67/294)

1. **Mr. Landveld** (Suriname), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that agricultural productivity and rural development were vital for poverty reduction and sustainable development. Based on that conviction, CARICOM had created the Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency to facilitate agricultural trade in the region. The Regional Food and Nutrition Security Policy, endorsed by the CARICOM Council on Trade and Economic Development in 2010, emphasized direct action to tackle hunger, medium and long-term sustainable agriculture, food security, and nutrition and rural development programmes to eliminate the root causes of hunger and poverty.

2. Initiatives to address food and nutrition security included the development of the Regional Food and Nutrition Security Action Plan; the elaboration of national food and nutrition security policies and action plans by several Member States; the development of an early warning system for food and nutrition security in the Caribbean region; regional and sub-regional workshops on fisheries, small-scale farming and family agriculture; the formation of a Parliamentary front against hunger; and the publication of a report on regional best practices in nutrition education.

3. A renewed emphasis was being placed on agriculture as a means of stabilizing food prices and ensuring the region's nutritional security, in addition to reversing the high incidence of chronic non-communicable diseases, which had resulted from the transition from local staples and produce to processed imported foods high in sugars, oil and salt. The Council on Trade and Economic Development acknowledged that regional food security was not the exclusive remit of the agriculture sector and that coordination among different sectors and at different levels would be required in order to solve particular problems.

4. The region was confronted with high levels of poverty and inequality of income and access to resources; those challenges had been compounded by rising food prices and the economic crisis, which had then increased unemployment, reduced income opportunities and decreased purchasing power. Food production was also hampered by the difficulty of exploiting economies of scale, owing to small land areas, small populations and the challenges posed by transport between Member States.

5. The Caribbean region needed support with disaster preparedness and with the development and implementation of climate change adaptation strategies, as it lacked the resources to tackle the intensifying effects of climate change in general, and the impact on agricultural production in particular.

6. CARICOM welcomed further integration and coherence among United Nations agencies in their development of policies that promoted increased market access for farmers in developing countries; tackling food waste and loss, which, in low income countries, occurred during the early and middle stages of the food supply chain as a result of financial, managerial and technical limitations; and technology transfer, technological development and assistance in strengthening the resilience of the agricultural sector to climate change.

7. **Mr. Zinsou** (Benin), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that the Group was gravely concerned at the extent of the extreme poverty, hunger and malnutrition affecting the world's population, as well as at the alarming rise in food prices. While the least developed countries had made numerous efforts to improve their agricultural production, the limited development of their production capacities had led to food scarcity, leaving them dependent on food imports and international food aid. Moreover, climate change had the most devastating impact — in the form of drought, soil erosion, desertification and other phenomena — on those countries in the Group that polluted the least, jeopardizing their prospects for lifting themselves out of poverty.

8. Out of their firm resolve to do their fair share to implement the Istanbul Programme of Action, the least developed countries called on their development partners to fulfil their commitments to provide technical and financial support for agriculture development and thus achieve global food security; to support efforts to increase agricultural productivity; to provide the relevant United Nations entities the resources needed to expand and improve need-based

food aid programmes; to assist the least developed countries in putting in place marine and agricultural research and development institutions and strengthen their institutional capacities; and to provide the least developed countries with resilient and climate-resistant seed varieties.

9. He noted with dismay that only half the amounts pledged in 2009 for agriculture and food security under the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative had been disbursed, with two months remaining in the programme timeframe. Moreover, he expressed concern at the impact of efforts to attract large-scale foreign investment on the living conditions of domestic smallholders and their communities, also calling for measures to reduce the risk of transmitting shocks from the energy sector to the agricultural and, in particular, to the food supply sector as a result of unchecked biofuel production.

10. He welcomed the work of the Committee on World Food Security in several areas, including studies on food price volatility and the elaboration of the Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment. In that connection, the reports on land tenure and international investments in agriculture on food price volatility should be disseminated and their recommendations heeded in efforts to develop agricultural production in the least developed countries in a manner that left room for small-scale farmers to make environmentally sound contributions to food security and economic growth. The United Nations should assist Governments in developing appropriate regulatory structures to prevent land grabs that might adversely affect food security, particularly in the least developed countries. The pursuit of the right to food should be attuned to the need to maintain a sustainable food security value chain by building a climate-resilient agriculture that ensured food security and protected the environment.

11. **Mr. Souissi** (Morocco) said that his country's food security depended on the development of its agricultural sector, which was at the mercy of recurrent drought, desertification, floods, soil erosion and other climatic phenomena. Furthermore, speculation on staple products in international markets further jeopardized food security. In the hope of reversing the decline in agricultural productivity, his Government had undertaken a number of initiatives, including a plan aimed at making agriculture one of the main engines of economic growth, with a focus on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through the planting of fruit trees; the introduction of drought-resistant crops; the launch of a national programme to save water for irrigation; and the creation of a national agency for oasis zones whose mandate included rehabilitating oases and combating desertification in semi-arid and arid areas.

12. His delegation reiterated its solidarity with drought-stricken African countries and its commitment to sharing its agricultural experience in vital South-South and triangular cooperation. Morocco fully supported the Secretary-General's Zero Hunger Challenge as well as the Food and Agriculture Organization's decision to create a trust fund for food security in Africa and the establishment of an agricultural market information system.

13. **Mr. Emvula** (Namibia) said that his country was semi-arid to arid and, as such, vulnerable to food shortages, with roughly a third of its rural households living in poverty. Like the rest of the region, Namibia was severely affected by climate change, water scarcity and land degradation.

14. In an effort to redress the historically unequal land distribution that had favoured a small minority of the population, his Government supported agriculture as a strategic sector in its fourth national development plan. Moreover, the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, whose work included diversifying agricultural practices and products and promoting food safety standards, counted ensuring food security among its primary concerns. The Namibian Cabinet had recently approved a water subsidy scheme for about 84,000 poor households as from 2016.

15. Namibia fully supported the Zero Hunger Challenge launched at the Rio+20 Conference and trusted that food security would figure prominently in the post-2015 development agenda. The Namibian Prime Minister was a member of the Scaling Up Nutrition Lead Group, and his office was the convener of the recently established Namibian Alliance for Improved Nutrition, which aimed to tackle the high levels of stunting in the country.

16. Namibia looked forward to negotiating further bilateral and multilateral trade agreements to improve its access to international livestock markets. His delegation thanked the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for its continued support and ongoing projects aimed at improving

production and technology transfer. In closing, he highlighted the important role of women in agriculture and food production around the world and called for the gender aspect of agriculture and food security to be incorporated into national and international development agendas.

17. **Ms. Nemroff** (United States of America) said that her Government's pledge under the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative of at least US$ 3.5 billion to combat hunger had helped bring increased attention to food security, leveraging over US$ 22 billion in commitments from other donors. That financial pledge had led to the Feed the Future initiative, which aimed to lift the incomes of vulnerable people, prevent stunting and child mortality, generate agricultural income in target regions and leverage private investments to improve sustainable market opportunities for vulnerable groups. Through Feed the Future, the United States had set ambitious targets that contributed to the World Health Assembly's new global goal to reduce the number of stunted children by 40 per cent by 2025. As part of its comprehensive approach to food security, Feed the Future prioritized research and development and encouraged its partners to do the same. Given the crucial but undervalued part that women played in agricultural production in the developing world, gender-specific and gender-sensitive programming would be central to the initiative's implementation.

18. The recently launched New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, an initiative spearheaded by the Group of Eight and African leaders with the aim of achieving sustained and inclusive agricultural growth in Africa, had scored early successes in a number of African countries. International and African companies had pledged over US$ 3.5 billion in support of the initiative.

19. Aware that good nutrition in the critical 1,000-day period from a woman's pregnancy until her child's second birthday had the biggest impact on saving lives and improving lifelong cognitive and physical development, her Government was involved in the 1,000 Days partnership and looked forward to continuing to work together with other stakeholders to prevent the deaths and stunting of many millions of children worldwide.

20. Civil society organizations were crucial to meeting food security and nutrition challenges. The members of InterAction, the largest alliance of United States-based international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), had committed to spending more than US$ 1 billion from 2012 to 2015 on programmes that advanced food security, agriculture, and nutrition. In the current difficult economic times, her Government understood that addressing the threat of global food insecurity and malnutrition was a humanitarian and moral imperative, one with a direct impact on global security and stability.

21. **Mr. Waheedi** (Afghanistan), underscoring the inextricable link between agricultural development and poverty, said that agriculture had traditionally been the main economic activity of roughly 80 per cent of the population of his country, accounting for about 35 per cent of Afghanistan's gross domestic product. As conflict and overuse of natural resources had caused widespread damage to Afghanistan's farmland, infrastructure and irrigation systems, his Government had made agricultural development the chief priority in its current national development strategy. The strategy's objective for the agriculture and rural development sector was to use private investment and public sector support to transform agriculture into a source of growth and means of livelihood for the rural poor.

22. Although agricultural conditions had improved since the devastating drought of the previous year, about 30 per cent of the Afghan population remained in a situation of food insecurity, facing malnutrition and undernourishment. Given that altered weather patterns adversely affected food production and the entire rural economy, he called on States to take effective and immediate action to mitigate climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

23. **Ms. Ben-Dor** (Israel) said that it would be necessary to produce more food with fewer resources while reinvigorating rural economies in order to achieve food security. Israel had extensive expertise to contribute in developing agricultural systems in dry lands. Despite severe water and land limitations, agricultural production in Israel — based almost entirely on science-linked technology — continued to grow as a result of the close cooperation between researchers, extension workers, farmers and agriculture-related services and industries. Over the previous 25 years, the country's output had increased sevenfold with hardly any increase in the amount of

water used, with more than 40 per cent of vegetables and field crops grown in the desert.

24. Agricultural projects and research collaboration constituted about half of Israel's international cooperation programmes. Emphasis was placed on agricultural training programmes offered in Israel and abroad. A recently approved project to build a model agricultural village in South Sudan would teach local farmers about Israel's breakthrough agricultural methods and technologies, in line with the themes underlined in the country's biannual resolution on agricultural technology for development. The resolution made clear that developing nations must receive not only assistance in acquiring new technologies but also capacity-building, education and transfer of skills in order to develop their own capabilities.

25. Special attention must be paid to smallholder farmers, particularly rural women, who represented up to 90 per cent of farmers in rural regions. The number of hungry people could be reduced by up to 150 million if female farmers in developing countries were given the same access to land, credits, seeds and tools as their male counterparts. Lastly, the structural causes of hunger and malnutrition and the impact of climatic pressures must also be addressed.

26. **Mr. Bengaly** (Burkina Faso) said that his country's agricultural production was hampered by such climatic phenomena as insufficient and irregular rainfall and soil erosion, thus jeopardizing food security, as 80 per cent of the population relied on farming for its livelihood. In order to take into account the needs of agricultural producers in devising agricultural policy, his Government had established regional chambers of agriculture and organized an annual forum for farmers and Government officials to exchange views. The resulting policies had placed particular emphasis on security of land tenure, development of off-season crops using small-scale irrigation, the implementation of action plans on farm mechanization and adaptation to climate change.

27. Burkina Faso had adopted a national food security programme whose features included an early-warning system to prevent such risks as droughts, locust plagues and floods; an emergency assistance plan run by the national entity responsible for managing food security reserves; and a national grain exchange to supply regions faced with grain shortfalls. His Government was also providing farmers with direct support in the form of agricultural inputs and distribution of improved seeds, in addition to promoting agro-processing and trade in agricultural products.

28. Burkina Faso had received tens of thousands of refugees fleeing humanitarian crises in the Sahel region and would need international assistance to cope with the burden and the attendant risks to agriculture development and to the survival of millions. In order to ensure agriculture development and food security, Governments would have to better organize stakeholders and train them in modern management and market methods. Measures must also be taken to open up the areas of production and exchange, put in place effective market information systems and marketing infrastructure, and process products in a manner that would ensure their conservation and increase their added value.

29. **Mr. Sarki** (Nigeria) said that there was a need for coordinated global action to address the fallout from the global food crisis and the effects of climate change, and that the most severely affected regions, such as the Sahel region in Africa, must receive prompt and sustainable assistance. His country had recently experienced flooding disasters that had seriously affected agricultural output and left farmers homeless. The present crisis should be regarded as an opportunity to accord priority to agriculture, which held the key to sustainable food security, particularly in Africa. In that context, he called for international efforts to bring about a green revolution in Africa to be integrated into the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, which had been initiated by the New Partnership for Africa's Development to address growth in the agricultural sector, rural development and food security.

30. Achieving food security would require strengthening and revitalizing the agricultural sector in developing countries, including the empowerment of small- and medium-scale farmers, indigenous peoples, rural communities and rural women. In addition, the global community must provide developing countries with technical and financial assistance and capacity-building.

31. Nigeria had established a national food security programme to boost domestic production of food crops and develop agriculture-related industries. It had also

outlined medium- and long-term solutions, including a soft loan programme for university graduates interested in farming and extensive irrigation projects. Furthermore, his Government was encouraging the sustainable uses of water and was distributing improved varieties of food crops to farmers through its National Variety Release Committee.

32. **Mr. Favero** (Brazil) said that protectionism in developed countries had been threatening food security in the developing world, hindering its agricultural production by exposing it to unfair competition from subsidized goods while denying it access to important external markets. Agricultural protectionism also granted unfair advantages to producers in developed countries and discouraged production diversification and investment in the rural sector in developing countries, hence the need for the World Trade Organization to achieve a balanced, development-oriented conclusion of the Doha Development Round of trade negotiations.

33. Efforts to increase the productivity of small farmers were crucial to ensuring food security in developing countries. Over the previous decade, Brazil had made unprecedented progress in terms of food security and poverty reduction, lifting almost 40 million people out of poverty and achieving a significant reduction in the levels of social and economic inequality. Such gains should be shared through cooperation with all nations facing the same challenges. Aiming to bring immediate results to people in need, Brazil had undertaken 34 technical cooperation agreements in the area of agriculture with 17 Sub-Saharan African countries. Efforts centred on providing technical cooperation and credit in order to support jobs and income in rural areas of Africa, concentrating on smallholder farmers; increasing productivity by transfer of technologies; and sharing Brazil's experience in producing biofuels without compromising food security.

34. As the host of the 2016 Summer Olympic Games, Brazil would hold a summit on hunger during the Games in order to use the public interest generated by the Olympics to leverage international action against hunger and malnutrition. The excessive volatility of food prices in international markets was a matter of serious concern that must be addressed effectively. The Group of 20 had made a significant contribution through its maintenance of the Agricultural Market Information System, which had increased transparency in an unprecedented way. However, stable and affordable food prices alone could not ensure food security. In the long run, it was job creation, income generation and technological advances that would guarantee access to adequate, sufficient, safe and nutritious food. It was important, therefore, to raise production levels and maintain remunerative prices for agricultural products in order to ensure that farmers in developing countries had enough income. In closing, he called on Member States to redouble their efforts to turn agriculture into an engine of sustainable development and food and nutrition security.

35. **Ms. Myat** (Myanmar) said that her Government attached high priority to agricultural development, as the agriculture sector was the mainstay not only of food security and rural development but also of economic growth. The Government focused on seed production, training and education and research and development in its agricultural development efforts, while taking action to confront its challenges in macroeconomic policies, technology and infrastructure.

36. Myanmar promoted the role of the private sector in rice sector reforms, as rice was the primary national crop. Her Government had implemented a rice price guarantee to cushion the impact of price volatility on farmers, in addition to relaxing the export tax on agricultural products, granting tax exemptions on the import of agricultural inputs and machinery and providing credit for farmers to invest in crop production. Moreover, the formation of farmers' organizations was encouraged, and a farm land law would be finalized and adopted in order to facilitate farmers' access to Myanmar's abundance of arable land.

37. Cutting down on the amount of food wasted could have a significant impact on the livelihoods of many small farmers in developing countries. To that end, Myanmar had been cooperating with the international community on post-harvest techniques and invited investment in that regard. Overall, enhanced support from the international community would help provide solutions with regard to agriculture development and food security that would ensure the economic and social well-being of the world's peoples.

38. **Mr. Alemu** (Ethiopia) said that while the primary responsibility for solving the problem of hunger rested on the countries concerned, support from development partners was critical, especially in light of the huge

impact of climate change on the efforts of developing countries to achieve food security. Calling on partners to mobilize the resources needed for agricultural productivity merely constituted a request for the fulfilment of existing commitments made in different forums. In that connection, he expressed appreciation for the launch of the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition and hoped that its efforts to accelerate the flow of private capital to African agriculture, take to scale new technologies that could increase sustainable agricultural productivity, and reduce the risk borne by vulnerable economies would make up for the gaps in implementation of existing commitments.

39. Increasing agricultural productivity and ensuring food security were among the top priorities on Ethiopia's development agenda. The Government's five-year development plan aimed at ensuring that smallholder farmers would become the engine of agricultural growth. The implementation of the plan had already brought about increases in crop and livestock production as well as in the provision of agricultural extension services.

40. A food security programme had been implemented in drought-prone areas in conjunction with household asset building and safety-net programmes, which had benefited over 7 million people. Large-scale farming was also being encouraged in uninhabited areas that were suitable for agriculture. Despite the unfounded insinuation to the contrary, his Government's activities in that regard had been consistent with its focus on smallholder farmers as the primary agent of agriculture development, which required improved productivity.

41. **Ms. Bajaña** (Nicaragua) said that her Government's national strategy of food sovereignty and security had been conceived to guarantee the Nicaraguan people's right to protection from hunger. While food security meant guaranteed access to nutritious, culturally acceptable and fairly priced nourishment, food sovereignty constituted the development of the national capacity to ensure production, availability and stability in the population's food supply. On several occasions, her delegation had stressed the structural causes of the food crisis, namely, an unjust international economic order and economic policies that were detrimental to agricultural sustainability in developing countries. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, Nicaragua's school feeding programme was among the world's best, and the country had achieved the Millennium Development Goal on poverty reduction. Her Government's efforts to reduce economic inequality, as measured by the Gini coefficient, had also been successful. Those advances had been made possible by a number of social projects that specifically targeted Nicaraguan women, including a food production programme and a microcredit scheme that aimed to empower women involved in agriculture. The establishment of the Family Economy Ministry had also contributed to reducing poverty and unemployment and generating prosperity for Nicaraguan families, as a direct result of the income redistribution policies that the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) had helped formulate.

42. The contributions of the ALBA platform had been essential in redressing the historical injustice of inherited poverty in her country, reducing poverty and inequality, overcoming the food crisis and restoring the rights to food, health, education and a decent living that the Nicaraguan Government promoted. The innovative system promoted fair trade in agricultural products and facilitated smallholder farmers' inclusion in the production process. Furthermore, financing obtained through the ALBA platform supported a variety of interrelated anti-poverty programmes that were turning hundreds of thousands of Nicaraguans into economic actors and helping reduce hunger and extreme poverty in the country.

43. Turning to employment, she pointed out that Nicaragua had had the highest rise in employment in Latin America in 2011 — another landmark achievement attributable to the contribution of ALBA — in addition to significant growth in the country's gross domestic product over the previous three years.

44. **Ms. Diaz** (Philippines) said that over half of the population of her country lived in rural areas. Her Government had increased its agriculture budget by 60 per cent and was investing heavily in infrastructure, raising awareness on and working to foster seed security and resiliency while lowering rice importation, with a view to achieving self-sufficiency within the next two years. In 2009, the Philippine Magna Carta of Women had ensured the active participation of women in food security-productive resources, giving particular attention to poor girls and marginalized women. The success of those and other initiatives was generating an optimism linked to the increasing trust of farmers and agricultural stakeholders in the Government, which

would be completing its agrarian reform programme in 2014.

45. There was a need to enhance a rules-based international trade regime on agricultural products that could strike a balance with the aspirations of developing and least developed countries. Recalling the fundamental right to be free from hunger, she reiterated her country's commitment to achieving full agricultural development and food security for all. In closing, she thanked countries for their support of General Assembly resolution 66/222 of 22 December 2011 declaring 2014 the International Year of Family Farming, the implementation of which was being facilitated by the Food and Agriculture Organization and its partners.

46. **Mr. Labo** (Niger) said that his delegation attached great importance to agriculture development and food security, in light of the recurring crises faced by the Niger over the previous decade. His Government's 3 Ns Initiative aimed to protect the population of Niger from famine and malnutrition, to guarantee their share in national production and profitable income and to protect the country's economy and development efforts from climatic and other natural phenomena to which its agriculture sector was especially vulnerable.

47. The 3 Ns Initiative entailed a wide variety of measures and targets, such as improving farmers' access to rural financial services; increasing grain production by introducing irrigation-based agriculture; and cutting in half the percentage of the population living under the poverty line. The overarching aim of the programme was to integrate agriculture development, food security, environmental protection and poverty eradication into a unified strategy. At the institutional level, a Government entity was established to ensure the programme's financial autonomy.

48. Aware that its own technical and financial capacities were insufficient to carry out a project on that scale, Niger was looking forward to receiving the necessary support from international partners through the fulfilment of commitments undertaken to combat hunger, including the Zero Hunger Challenge, Millennium Development Goal 1 and others. His delegation welcomed the 49 per cent increase in official development assistance for agriculture and nutrition in 2012 and eagerly anticipated the forthcoming International Congress of Nutrition, scheduled for 2013.

49. **Mr. McLay** (New Zealand) said that his Government took a great interest in international efforts to address agricultural development challenges and improve food security, since most of New Zealand's exports were in the agricultural sector. Also important with regard to enhancing food security were regional efforts such as those of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). New Zealand welcomed the Secretary-General's Zero Hunger Challenge as a vision of a future free from hunger.

50. Also welcoming the commitments made at the Rio+20 Conference to increase global sustainable agricultural production, he recalled that climate change would be a major issue for the agricultural sector, also affecting the availability of fish stocks. Using innovation and technology alongside local knowledge, it would be possible to increase both productivity and production in an environmentally sustainable manner. Identifying climate-resilient agricultural production systems that ensured food security and protected the environment must become a global priority.

51. Aware of the importance of climate-related adaptation programmes, New Zealand had been instrumental in setting up the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases in order to explore how food production could be increased without increasing greenhouse gas emissions, and it encouraged other countries to engage in the initiative.

52. As New Zealand's pre-eminence as a dairy exporter was sustained by its dairy industry cooperatives, its farmers recognized the value of cooperatives as a large-scale, serious business model. Moreover, his country had been looking at more innovative ways of sharing its agricultural expertise and getting the private sector more involved in agriculture development programmes, in addition to exploring new partnerships with Governments beyond its traditional partners.

53. However, growth in food production alone would not meet increasing global demand. An open and transparent trading system that gave developing countries access to regional and international markets was equally important. The further liberalization of agricultural trade under the Doha Development Round of trade negotiations remained a top priority for New Zealand, in particular the removal of agricultural

subsidies that discouraged investment in agriculture in those countries that most needed to enhance their food production. The phased reduction of tariffs and agreed disciplines against protectionist measures would provide a sound basis to move towards a more food-secure and stable global economy. His delegation encouraged members of the World Trade Organization to work towards a comprehensive outcome on agriculture and welcomed the commitment made in the outcome of the Rio+20 Conference to eliminate harmful subsidies in the fisheries sector.

54. **Mr. León González** (Cuba) said that it was unforgivable that over a billion tons of food were wasted per year – in developed countries to a great extent – in a world where 10 million children under the age of five died of malnutrition every year. People living in extreme poverty spent nearly 70 per cent of their income on food, and millions of people courted food insecurity, suffering the consequences of rising food prices caused by the crisis befalling the global capitalist system that had been imposed on the rest of the world by the most powerful countries. As long as the large multinational corporations in the agro-food industry remained in control of the prices, technologies, standards, certifications, distribution channels and sources of funding for world food production, millions would be condemned to die of hunger or suffer from chronic malnutrition. Developing countries must therefore discontinue subsidies to their agricultural producers, which adversely affected small farmers and rural populations in the developing world.

55. The staggering percentage of income from exports that Third World countries currently spent on repaying their foreign debt constituted another obstacle to eradicating world hunger, as did the unjust trading relationship between developing countries forced to sell their goods for increasingly lower prices and developed countries that used protectionist measures to close their markets. Developed countries must abide by their commitment to allocate 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product to official development assistance, and the billions of dollars spent on wars of conquest and the subversion of democratic regimes that did not meet with the approval of the world's power brokers should instead be allocated to combating the scourge of hunger.

56. The right to safe, sufficient, nutritious food was an inalienable human right that should be realized through concrete measures, not just words. His Government fully supported the initiatives taken by the Food and Agriculture Organization and recognized the important role of its renewed Committee on World Food Security, an entity whose intergovernmental, multilateral character made it the appropriate forum for seeking a solution to the problems of global food insecurity and malnutrition. The cruel and unjust economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba constituted the main obstacle to the Cuban people's full exercise of the right to food. Unilateral measures of that nature were morally and ethically unsustainable and therefore doomed to become obsolete.

57. **Mr.** Mohamed **Diallo** (Guinea) said that despite the encouraging results achieved in recent years, the food crisis remained a source of major concern for the international community, in particular developing countries. In that context, his Government had decided to accord priority attention to agriculture in its socioeconomic development programme, putting in place policies to attain food self-sufficiency for the entire population and to facilitate farmers' access to land, with a view to increasing agricultural productivity and competitiveness and entrenching food security. An increase in arable lands the previous year had led to enhanced productivity.

58. The sharp rise in the price of staples, together with insufficient national production of rice owing to lack of food diversification and population growth, were causes for alarm. With the support of private financiers to supplement its own limited resources, his Government had put in place a distribution system that allowed the population to purchase rice, flour, sugar and oil at affordable prices.

59. Guinea also planned to stimulate its agricultural production of export products and to strengthen both public and private sector support for agricultural infrastructure in order to prevent costly post-harvest losses. In sum, his delegation was convinced that efforts to achieve development goals would be doomed to failure until significant gains were made in combating hunger worldwide.

60. **Ms. Brennen-Haylock** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)), speaking also on behalf of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP), said that while the number of people in chronic hunger had declined by 130 million

people over the previous 20 years, 868 million people — an unacceptably high number — were still hungry. Three global challenges must be tackled, namely, high and volatile food prices, which continued to put pressure on the poor; the long-term issue of how food was produced, traded and consumed in an age of increasing population growth; and access to nutritious food among the poorest, especially in the 1,000 days from the start of a woman's pregnancy until her child's second birthday, so as to break the cycle of poverty and malnutrition.

61. The Rome-based agencies had programmes in place to overcome the challenge that countries faced in attempting to confront all the issues at once, recognizing the need to balance short- and long-term needs and empower women, poor farmers and poor consumers. In addition, the Rome-based agencies actively engaged in such international development processes as South-South cooperation and promoted partnerships and enhanced dialogue among different stakeholders to ensure that food and nutrition security were adequately mainstreamed and monitored.

62. With respect to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, the Rome-based agencies had established an Inter-Agency Working Group on Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition and Rural Development in the LDCs in order to articulate a development approach specific to the needs of least developed countries.

63. Of particular concern was that women, who were central to the development of rural areas and to national economies, had restricted access to productive resources, which in turn limited the efficiency of the agricultural sector. The recently launched joint programme between UN Women and the Rome-based agencies on accelerating progress towards the economic empowerment of rural women was therefore focused on improving food and nutrition security, increasing incomes, enhancing leadership and participation in rural institutions and creating a more responsive national and international policy environment for rural women.

64. Having developed new policies and instruments, such as the United Nations High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, the Rome-based agencies were better placed to address the challenge of high and volatile food prices. Under the Scaling Up Nutrition movement, over 30 national Governments had expressed a commitment to prioritizing nutrition actions. The International Conference on Nutrition 21 years later (ICN+21) to be held in November 2013 would bring food, agriculture, health and other sectors together to mobilize the political will and resources necessary for improving nutrition.

65. Ending hunger and malnutrition must be a top post-2015 development priority, as confirmed at the Rio+20 Conference. The United Nations Development Group had taken steps to convening global thematic consultations on 11 important themes, the outcome of which would feed into the General Assembly discussions at its next session. The global thematic consultation on hunger, food and nutrition security aimed to keep those issues high on the post-2015 development agenda, as it was necessary to begin looking beyond the MDGs to the total eradication of hunger, in line with the Secretary-General's Zero Hunger Challenge.

66. *Mr. Talbot (Guyana), Chair, took the Chair.*

Agenda item 24: Eradication of poverty and other development issues (A/67/228)

(a) Implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) (A/67/180)

67. **Ms. Bas** (Director for Social Policy and Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (A/67/180), said that the focus of the report was on the decade theme of decent and productive employment. Of particular concern was the persistent challenge of youth unemployment, which had been aggravated by the economic and financial crisis and the subsequent move of more countries towards fiscal austerity and reductions in social spending.

68. The report encouraged Member States to give priority in their development strategies to creating decent and productive jobs and to implementing employment policies for such vulnerable groups as rural people, who accounted for a disproportionate number of the world's poor. Member States should also make efforts to reduce inequality and guarantee universal access to basic social protection. Lastly, the report emphasized the need for all stakeholders to engage in dialogue and partnership as part of their

efforts to implement the post-2015 development agenda and the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Poverty.

(b) Industrial development cooperation (A/67/223)

69. **Mr. Assaf** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)), introducing the report of the Director General of UNIDO (A/67/223), highlighted two important observations contained therein. First, three quarters of the world's poor lived in middle-income countries and not in poorer countries, as had been the case in earlier decades. Second, there was currently a greater emphasis in the composition of South-South cooperation funding on industrial and economic activity, in stark contrast to the previous tendency of traditional donors to concentrate funding in the social, humanitarian and governance sectors.

70. Since the previous report, while many countries had been faced with continued economic and financial crises, the manufacturing industry in developing countries had remained relatively resilient, shielding many in those countries from the most serious effects of the crises. Industry remained a prime driver of overall economic growth in developing countries, and manufacturing had been the key source of renewed economic growth and recovery from the financial crisis in some developed countries, demonstrating that industry continued to matter greatly for sustainable and inclusive growth. However, the share of low-income countries in global manufacturing remained troublingly small at 1.4 per cent. Against that backdrop, the central challenge for industrial development cooperation was how to spread the significant benefits of a healthy manufacturing sector more equitably and sustainably across regions and countries as well as within countries. The extent to which equitable and sustainable development would be achieved would depend on how well industrial development was integrated into the mainstream of multilateral development cooperation.

71. A number of challenges not adequately reflected in the Millennium Development Goals framework would need to be addressed in the post-2015 development agenda. First, the alarming phenomenon of jobless growth and its severe consequences, especially in Africa, would require an expansion of the range of employment opportunities in developing countries. Second, the widening income inequality gap in middle-income countries could be reduced by a vibrant manufacturing sector, which could lift significant numbers of people out of poverty by creating wealth and promoting entrepreneurship and technological dynamism. Third, there was a need to move towards greening existing industries and creating new green industries in developing and industrialized nations alike. Lastly, energy access must be ensured, as energy poverty was central to all three dimensions of sustainable development.

72. The activities of UNIDO focused on three thematic priorities, namely, poverty reduction through productive activities, trade capacity-building and energy and the environment. With regard to unemployment, UNIDO would devote its *Industrial Development Report 2013* to examining the relationship between sustainable industrialization and employment generation. The forthcoming report would provide critical analytical and policy guidance to Governments seeking to address the employment challenges of their countries. In its trade capacity-building thematic priority, UNIDO helped countries develop their national and regional legal and institutional frameworks for quality and standards, with the largest portfolio of trade-related capacity-building projects in the United Nations system. The Organization was also an implementing partner in both the Enhanced Integrated Framework initiative and the Standards and Trade Development Facility.

73. Turning to sustainable energy, he stressed that the ambitious goals of the Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All initiative, in which UNIDO had a lead role, could be reached with the right mix of policy incentives, public finance, private capital, and political will and leadership. The initiative boasted significant private sector participation, with commitments totalling over US$ 50 billion. In order to tackle the challenge of decoupling the consumption of natural resources and the release of greenhouse gas emissions from economic growth, UNIDO was spearheading the Green Industry Platform, a voluntary, multi-stakeholder partnership designed to advance an environmentally sustainable approach to industry.

74. In a highly interdependent, globalized world, the fortunes of industrialized and developing countries were intimately tied together. Although many developing economies had been resilient in the midst of crisis because of their manufacturing performance, much remained to be achieved to reduce poverty and

inequalities, increase employment in developing countries, especially for women and young people, and achieve development goals for 2015 and beyond. In line with its mandate, UNIDO would redouble its efforts to provide the highest level of support to developing countries to achieve their sustainable and inclusive development aspirations.

75. **Mr. Rahman** (United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization on the promotion of ecotourism for poverty eradication and environment protection (A/67/228), thanked all Member States and relevant specialized agencies that had responded to the UNWTO questionnaire. Although only 48 responses had been received, they represented a diversity of geographic locations, levels of development, experiences gained and challenges faced. The report showed that while almost all of the respondent countries had tourism policies, more than a third of them did not include specific components on ecotourism. Countries interested in incorporating ecotourism into their respective tourism policies could benefit from the several international initiatives identified in the report, which also highlighted suggested areas of assistance from the United Nations, specialized agencies and regional and international financial institutions. Noting the steady rise in the global demand for tourism, he stressed the importance of the Committee's consideration of ecotourism for poverty eradication and environment protection within the framework of sustainable tourism development.

76. **Mr. Djacta** (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the constraints placed on the fight against poverty by the current global crises were cause for serious concern, as eradicating poverty was an indispensable requirement for achieving sustainable development. It was equally alarming that the number of people still living in poverty continued to increase in some countries, with women and children constituting the majority of those most affected, especially in the least developed countries. Moreover, the global economic situation posed the risk of compromising economic growth in middle-income countries. Against that backdrop, significant efforts would be required to reverse the decline in international resource flows, particularly financial assistance for development, and the worsening terms of international trade. More must also be done to address unemployment, promote productive capacities and strengthen agricultural development.

77. Given the potential of debt relief to assist developing countries in eradicating poverty, the global financial system should enthrone debt sustainability policies, including outright debt cancellation to heavily indebted poor countries. Noting that market access and trade expansion would help foster economic growth, he urged developed countries to remove trade barriers and agricultural subsidies. Furthermore, the transfer of technology by developed countries to the developing world played a critical role in facilitating their development-related efforts.

78. The Group reiterated the need for all stakeholders to maximize their microfinance instruments, including microcredit for poverty eradication and, in particular, for the empowerment of women and rural populations and the development of small and medium enterprises. It also reaffirmed its support for the Global Jobs Pact and called for continued coordination in its implementation in order to avert a job crisis.

79. Aware of the need to address the issue of women in development, he recalled that the advancement of women worldwide had been impeded by economic inequalities, unemployment and high levels of poverty and further compounded by globalization. Enhancing human resource capacity for decent work for all was vital for poverty eradication. In that regard, he emphasized the role of the public sector in the promotion of human resources development and that of the private sector and civil society in supporting the actions of national Governments.

80. Out of its conviction that poverty was the most pervasive violation of human and development rights, the Group stressed that an effective global campaign against poverty should be at the centre of national strategies and international cooperation. The ultimate responsibility for the success of such a campaign rested with national Governments. However, the pursuit of national policies must be supported by a favourable domestic environment and continued support from the international community, in the form of genuine international cooperation and implementation of concerted policies. In that regard, the World Solidarity Fund could contribute to the achievement of poverty eradication, hence the need to allocate sufficient resources for its operationalization.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.